

Assessment in Fieldwork Courses: What Are We Rating?

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Fieldwork exists as a component of many library schools' curricula. Site supervisors, students, and the schools themselves all play a role. A final part of most fieldwork experiences involves the use of an evaluation form filled out by a site supervisor about the student. In this study, forty seven evaluation forms were collected and analyzed through inductive content analysis in order to discern the attributes that are used to rate students. Attributes were compared to the *ALA Core Competences of Librarianship* and grouped into related subject-categories. Findings show that form content varied widely and few forms captured all tenets of the *Core Competences*. Recommendations include a new all-encompassing evaluation form that can be tailored to many different fieldwork experiences, and suggestions for future study on fieldwork.

Keywords: practicum, fieldwork, evaluation, assessment, content analysis

Introduction

Fieldwork has many variations, definitions, and interchangeable terms associated with it. Library schools have different names for the experience, including practicum, field problems, internship in libraries, library practice work, professional field experience, and cooperative education (Futas, 1994; Mediavilla, 2006). According to the Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE) (1990), fieldwork essentially entails learning in a professional work setting. Formally, ALISE says it is the “structured pre-professional work experience which takes place during graduate coursework or after coursework but preceding the degree” (Futas, 1994, p. 146).

For the purposes of this study, Coleman's (1989) definition of fieldwork (echoed by Nakano & Morrison, 1992) as a “relatively short-term, professionally supervised work experience offered as part of the school's curriculum and taken during the academic sequence” (p. 22) is restricted to unpaid experience, and enlarged to include the practica and field experienc-

es discussed in literature describing fieldwork. It is generally held that fieldwork of this nature is conducted pre-degree, but at the end of a degree program (Monroe, 1981; Palmer, 1975). It is commonly administered by faculty or designees within library schools. A host site is the location where the fieldwork occurs.

Ongoing communication between all involved is necessary so there are no surprises in assessment (Claggett, *et al.*, 2002). Instantaneous feedback on any misinterpretations or errors is often necessary (Genovese, 1991). The student is not only gaining real world experience about library basics, but is also participating in an introduction to peer review, evaluation, and human resources issues. One school reports that its evaluation form serves as a mechanism through which students can get “more formalized feedback on their progress as measured against professional criteria” (Botello, 2006, p. 15), although the exact criteria are not specified.

Assessment as a problem regularly occurs in library literature, as it is difficult to assess what is not always seen (Brundin, 1989; Damasco & McGurr, 2008; Nakano

& Morrison, 1992; Ricker, 2005). It is hard to create a fair evaluation of competence and skill based on infrequent observation. Faculties are noted as indicating the need for better methods to assess student performance, and how to assess their own support of the students (Nakano & Morrison, 1992). A lack of correspondence between faculty and site supervisors is an issue, and there is a lack of group effort in establishing the objectives before field experience begins (Coburn, 1980; McGurr & Damasco, 2010). No consensus exists as to whether faculty should ultimately be responsible for assigning grades or credit for fieldwork, or the site supervisor, or some combination of both parties.

This study aims to collocate and analyze the evaluation forms used by library schools that are distributed to fieldwork supervisors in order to discern what attributes we expect students to be rated. Specific research questions include:

What are the most frequently occurring attributes?

How do library school evaluation forms compare to one another?

How do the attributes on evaluation forms compare to the *ALA Core Competences for Librarianship*?

The researcher also proposes a new evaluation form that takes the *ALA Core Competences* into consideration, along with information that can help the library school assess the experience.

Literature Review

History of Fieldwork in Library Schools

Research looking at fieldwork in library schools has generally been historical and comparative, showing a progression in the regard for fieldwork in the curriculum. Since the late 1800s, the idea of fieldwork has been discussed in library literature.

Monroe (1981) stated that its initial purpose was to mitigate a deficiency of textbooks and a lack of established curriculum. Library school advocates in the late 1800s argued that trained professionals were needed, but the suggested methods through which to train them were varied and opposing. Melvil Dewey (1879) spoke of fieldwork as apprenticeships, and recommended guided, supervised experience as a part of librarian education (Metcalf, *et al.*, 1943).

In 1923 Williamson said, on the other hand, that students reading library literature in conjunction with faculty teaching would be training enough. The first president of ALA, Justin Winsor, advocated in 1891 that fieldwork is “the best preparation for librarianship” (White, 1961, p. 76). Much debate ensued during this time as to which of three methods of training was the best: formal training in school, formal training in school coupled with fieldwork, or straight practical work in a library.

The number of library schools grew, and the differences between the training programs expanded. The contest between theory versus practice raged, and ALA committees conducted a number of studies to ascertain the extent of uniformity in schools and to make recommendations for changes. In 1905, the Committee on Library Training stated a requirement for at least one-sixth of a student’s time to be spent in supervised practice work (Churchwell, 1975). Library schools disagreed, although one library school, Antioch College in Ohio, did initiate a cooperative fieldwork type of education. Those students took turns filling practical positions in libraries in Ohio, then traded back to class work. Northwestern University and the University of Cincinnati also implemented similar plans during this time (St. John, 1938).

Williamson’s 1923 report showed that all schools of the day required some form of practice work, but regulations, time involved, and names varied. He commented

that no school could rationalize decisions regarding fieldwork even though it appealed to the schools as part of the curriculum, and better administration of it was needed. Further, schools could make no indications as to how sites were selected, and there was a lack of regard for student needs or wants.

ALA gave suggested curriculum requirements in 1926, including a minimum of 108 hours of fieldwork. In 1933, however, Reece denounced fieldwork and advocated a separation of it from the curriculum. St. John looked at the history, short as it was then, of fieldwork in library education and made the recommendation that an experimental program be established at libraries approved by the ALA Board of Education for Librarianship to train interns, and that perhaps this could occur at the expense of a philanthropic association. A trial program started in the Tennessee Valley Authority library system, but before it could conclude, the Second World War ended it (Palmer, 1975; St. John, 1938).

Debate and differentiation on the part of the library schools continued into the 1940s. At the 1948 Conference on Education for Librarianship, comparisons between the field and other professions made a strong case for including fieldwork in the curriculum. A paradigm shift from separating theory and practice to simultaneous occurrence seemed to transpire, and fieldwork gained more acceptance among library schools. Van Deusen (1949) noted the shift in his summary of library education at the time. He predicted that more attention would be paid to the students themselves, and a consideration of their lives before and after the library school program. This would entail a preparatory phase, in the form of fieldwork.

The 1960s brought more research and suggestions from different angles, including medical librarianship interns, suggestions of favor for fieldwork from the student perspective, and the need for more comprehensive study (Ricker, 2005; Rothstein, 1989). *The Conant Report* in the

1970s recommended a “substantial” fieldwork experience, but noted that only some faculty supported this. It was during this time that a number of library school surveys ensued, where researchers either analyzed the stated offerings of the schools, or polled them on fieldwork requirements. The findings showed an upward trend in the percentage of schools offering fieldwork in their curricula (Futas, 1994).

In the 1980s library schools promoted provision of fieldwork as a job-seeking tool (Samek & Oberg, 1999). Berry (1998) recommended that prospective students make note of the availability of fieldwork in the curriculum as a selection tool in choosing the right library school program. Case studies of well-performed fieldwork and models for future development of fieldwork appeared. Students began writing about their own experiences, and these articles could be used as recruiting tools for libraries and library schools alike (Samek & Oberg, 1999).

Library School Surveys

Over the past century there have been numerous surveys of accredited library schools about their curricula in general, and of fieldwork offerings specifically. These surveys provided a succinct portrait of the requirements and administration of fieldwork at different schools, and showed how the varying definitions of fieldwork affect the responses given. From year to year the amount of schools requiring or offering fieldwork changed, and not always in a predictable manner.

A primary exploration conducted by the ALA Committee on Library Training after its formation in 1903 discerned that library schools were experiencing a shift from general apprenticeships to more theoretical curricula (Vann, 1961). Two years later, only three of 11 schools met the recommended standard for practice work in library curriculum set forth in 1905 by a new Committee on Library Training, who advocated one-sixth of a library school

Table 1. Major Surveys of Library Schools Including a Fieldwork Component.

Study Conductor (Date Reported)	Date of Study	Number of Schools Offering Data	Number of Schools that Require Field- work of All Students	Number of Library Schools that Offer FieldWork as Option	Typical Hours Required of Student
Report of Committee on Library Schools (Larned et al. 1896)	1896	4	4	—	—
Report of the Committee on Library Training (Plummer <i>et al.</i> 1903)	1903	9	9	—	—
Association of American Library Schools (Vann 1961)	1915	15	15	—	120–464
Williamson (1923)	1921	15	—	—	160–480
Association of American Library Schools (Donnelly 1925)	1925	14	14	—	—
Van Deusen (1946)	1944	32	28	—	—
Rothstein (1989, reprint from 1968)	1967	36	10	—	—
Grotzinger (1971)	1969	42	—	14	—
Grotzinger (1971, second survey)	1970	48	10	—	—
Witucke (1976)	1972	55	6	—	18–450
Palmer (1975)	1973	35	—	20	80–160
Tietjen (1977)	1975	62	4	40	30–400
Coburn (1980)	1980	55	—	50	80–180
Coleman (1989)	1987	59	6	49	84–225
Nakano & Morrison (1992)	1988	55	7	42	—
Howden (1992)	1989	51	8	38	—
Markey (2004)	2002	54	9	—	—

student's time be spent in fieldwork. Another survey regarding fieldwork requirements occurred through Williamson's visits to library schools in the early 1920s. All of the 15 schools he visited required practical library work. Even though it was required, the schools had different constraints and methods for administering the programs, and hours required ranged from 160 to 480 (1923). The American Association of Library Schools reported that all 14 library schools in 1925 required fieldwork, and the next year, the ALA Board of Education for Librarianship's "Minimum Standards for Graduate Library Schools" recommended that 108 hours of a library

school student's time be spent in fieldwork (Katz, *et al.*, 1989).

In 1968, Rothstein published results from his examination of 36 library school catalogs. He reported that most of the schools requiring fieldwork might waive the obligation for students with prior experience (Rothstein, 1989). A few years later Grotzinger (1971) followed up Rothstein's study with a survey sent directly to the schools because she thought content-analysis of the catalogs to be insufficient and inaccurate. She found that some had specialized variations of field experience, including internships and special courses. In 1972, Witucke surveyed 55 library

schools as part of her dissertation, and found that eight schools offered no credit hours for field work experience, and that 25 offered between one and 18 hours of credit. Twenty-three programs issued a letter grade for the course, and nine listed a pass/fail grading system. Not much was required by any school for assessment, and few schools had communication between faculty and fieldwork supervising librarians (Witucke, 1976).

Shortly thereafter, Palmer questioned 58 library schools in his 1973 survey covering different types of fieldwork. His results show that practica were the most popular form of fieldwork experience offered by schools. His conclusion was that field experience was "about to enter its Renaissance" (Palmer, 1975, p. 252). Tietjen queried 62 library schools at the request of the Council on Library Resources in 1975. She discovered that fieldwork policies still varied greatly. She studied the responses geographically, indicating that the Southeast offered more fieldwork opportunities (1977).

In 1978, Coburn received responses from 55 library schools and found that 27 schools offered letter grades, and 18 used a pass/fail system. He asked in his questionnaire about payment to the student by the fieldwork site. Some schools have no problems with the practice, and one school even paid the fieldwork supervisors for each student they had doing fieldwork. Twenty-eight schools offered three credit hours for completion of a fieldwork assignment. Coburn also studied the similarities and differences among the components of the evaluation forms provided by the library schools (1980).

Almost ten years passed before the next examination of fieldwork requirements. Coleman distributed a survey to all ALA-accredited programs in 1987. Half of the schools counted the course for three credit hours, with six schools not offering credit at all. The range of hours for fieldwork experience varied from 84 to over 200 hours (Coleman, 1989). Although their research

was not aimed specifically at fieldwork experiences but rather at reference coursework, a 1988 survey by Nakano and Morrison (1992) indicated that six schools did not offer any fieldwork course work.

The Association for Library and Information Science Education decided to explore fieldwork requirements in library schools in 1989. Eighty-four percent offered course credit. ALISE did not inquire as to the length requirements for fieldwork courses, but did show that many schools had fieldwork prerequisites. The Association has continued asking these questions for the Curriculum section in annual statistical reports (Barron & Harris, 2004). One result from this study is the acknowledgement of a need for standards across library schools for fieldwork (Howden, 1992). During 2000 and 2002, Markey researched education trends in library and information science, comparing library school names, degree names, degree programs, and required coursework and found that 9 of 54 schools require fieldwork (Markey, 2004).

Assessment

As Wright (1949) said, if "practice work is to be truly educational, it must be as carefully thought out and planned as any classroom course" (p. 40). Learning objectives are necessary, and the principles of education must be communicated to all involved parties. Fieldwork should demonstrate a close relationship with true classroom coursework, and should be married with learning objectives (Ball, 2008; Ward, 1973). Steps should be taken to ensure a student is not seen as free labor only (Berry, 2005; Claggett, *et al.*, 2002; Hacker, 1986; Williamson, 1923), although this could be seen as a potential benefit to site supervisors (Futas, 1994; Ottolenghi, 2012).

Coburn (1980) provides a rudimentary evaluation form that could be adapted for different fieldwork situations. He based this form on an analysis of entry-level

librarian position descriptions, during which he identified skills and characteristics required of those job candidates. One section of this form covers personal attributes, such as integrity, personal appearance, and work habits. The second section covers professional competencies, like general knowledge, research skills, and communication effectiveness. He conducted another analysis of library school evaluation forms from which he gleaned suggested rating scales, and characteristics to be reviewed. Coburn (1980) also admits incorporating his own “experience and judgment”.

Methodology

The researcher undertook content analysis of fieldwork supervisor evaluation forms provided by library and information science schools to gauge what the schools ask public librarians hosting fieldwork students to assess, and to compare this with the American Library Association’s *Core Competences of Librarianship*. The researcher obtained copies of the assessment tools that English-speaking, ALA-accredited Library and Information Science schools offer to the site supervisors of fieldwork students at public libraries. The list of schools was generated by viewing the 2011 *Directory of ALA-Accredited Master’s Programs in Library and Information Science* document found on the ALA website.

Form collection was done through purposive, or relevance, sampling by locating such forms on each school’s website, or, if not available online, contacting the schools directly and requesting copies of the forms. All forms were collected between April and June of 2012. No geographic restrictions were in place for form collection, but forms were only obtained from those schools whose websites were written in English. This eliminated two schools, one whose website was in French, and another whose website was in Spanish. One school does not offer an unpaid

fieldwork course, and therefore has no evaluation form. Eight schools that do not use a formalized written or online form were also excluded from this analysis. Therefore, out of 58 ALA-accredited library schools listed in ALA’s 2011 *Directory*, a total of 47 forms were collected and analyzed.

Inductive content analysis was selected as a research method in order to “make replicable and valid inferences” in textual content that emerged “in the process of a researcher analyzing a text” (Krippendorff, 2013, p. 24). The coding units were the assessment characteristics, represented by words or phrases, on the forms. From the 47 library school evaluation forms, the researcher identified and extracted every individual item that required the fieldwork supervisor to assign some sort of ranking, grade, or evaluation to a fieldwork student, whether that be narrative or a provided choice. This totaled 836 characteristics that were isolated and copied into a spreadsheet.

To categorize the content of the evaluation forms, the researcher replicated Coburn’s 1980 analysis of library school evaluation forms. Coburn evaluated 23 forms, identified rating scales, and grouped the content of the evaluation forms into the categories of “traits of character” and “competencies.” So, the researcher clustered the remaining words and phrases into categories, and then frequencies within these categories were counted to ascertain how often distinct assessment characteristics appeared in the evaluation forms.

Results

The clusters below evolved from the routine duplication of evaluation characteristics on the forms provided by the library schools, and echo Coburn’s (1980) method of combining synonymous terms. As he found back then, it is still the case that library schools do not define all terms on evaluation forms, and there is the possibility for misinterpretation.

The categories that emerged were:

- American Library Association's *Core Competences* (broken into the eight competency statements)
- Personal Characteristics
- Relations with Others
- Work Habits
- Personal Knowledge and Abilities
- Ability to Learn
- Emotional Attributes
- Commitment
- Professionalism
- Work Performance
- Strengths and Weaknesses

The evaluation forms provided to fieldwork supervisors ranged in depth and complexity. For the mechanism of evaluation, 36 asked for both ratings of qualities and narrative descriptions. One used ratings solely, and seven used narratives only. Two forms simply asked the question "How did the student meet the objectives?" The last form provided a blank space for the supervisor to choose qualities that they elected to rate.

Some of the library school fieldwork evaluation forms contained additional questions about the students that did not

fit into a direct evaluation category. Several required yes or no answers, but a few required narrative responses that pinpoint the student's responsibilities and best qualities.

Almost half of the forms provided a space in which the fieldwork supervisor could list the student's responsibilities and/or goals, and about half of those asked for a rating of success on whether or not the student met them. Twelve of the 47 forms had a space for the supervisor to indicate whether or not they would hire that particular fieldwork student. Only one form asked the supervisor directly if they had any problems working with the student.

Another component of some of the evaluation forms was the library schools' inquiries to the fieldwork supervisors about the value of the fieldwork experience. Eleven asked how the library school could improve the experience for the library. Nine asked if the experience was worthwhile for the library. Lastly, six asked the supervisors if they would do fieldwork supervision again.

Core Competences

The characteristics included in the

Table 2. Additional Evaluation Form Questions.

Characteristic	Frequency
Ask supervisor to list student responsibilities/goals	20
Rate success in meeting stated goals/assignments	12
Would you hire student?	12
Would you give student a recommendation?	4
Was student able to contribute to the host site?	4
Was student adequately prepared via coursework?	3
Predict student's degree of success in the field	3
General impression of student	2
What do you think student learned/gained?	2
Did student work required amount of time to complete course?	1
Did you have any problems working with student?	1
Did you discuss career plans with student?	1
List most valuable skills you look for in an intern	1
List most valuable skills of this particular intern	1

Table 3. Frequency of “Foundations of the Profession” Competencies.

Characteristic	Frequency
Communication, communication skills, employs effective communication skills, communicated, communicated well, communicates well with patrons, communicates well with patrons and staff, communicates well with staff, communicate with supervisor	17
Analysis skills, analytic ability problem solving, analytical skills, analyze problems, assist in providing original solutions, and follow through with implementation plans; critical thinking skills	6
Communicate in writing, communication skills written, writing ability, written communication	6
Communicate verbally, communication skills verbal, oral/speaking ability, verbal communication	6
Apply theory, apply theory to practice; apply theory, conceptual principles and scholarly research; applying the concepts and principles of library and information sciences	4
Communicates clearly in writing and speaking, oral and written communication, written and spoken communication	4
Expressed himself/herself in written and oral English, Uses correct English, use of English-spoken, use of English-written	4
Intellectual freedom, recognizes the tenets of intellectual freedom	3
Privacy, maintain confidentiality, patron privacy	3
Information policy, information issues and regulations	2
Knows history of information professions, background knowledge of librarianship at the outset	2
Awareness of current issues/events that impact libraries	1
Awareness of professional ethics	1
Communicate appropriately to individuals, and groups through group discussions and presentations	1
Express oneself	1
Foreign language proficiency	1
Intellectual property	1
Interest in the issues, policies, and organizations related to the field	1
Knowledge of subject area	1
Maintains a professional demeanor in verbal interactions with staff	1
Recognizes libraries’ needs for advocates	1
Self-confidence in speaking and behavior	1
Understands the changing roles of information professionals	1

grouping category of “Core Competences” reflect the skills and aptitudes included in the *ALA Core Competences* (2009). According to ALA’s document, “a person graduating from an ALA-accredited master’s program in library and information studies should know and, where appropriate, be able to employ” the skills and aptitudes in the document.

Foundations of the Profession

The “Foundations of the Profession” competency covers the role of librarians, intellectual freedom, ethics, principles, and history of the profession. It is the broadest of the eight competencies, and envelops types of libraries, current trends, legal implications, certification, the history of hu-

Table 4. Frequency of “Information Resources” Competencies.

Characteristic	Frequency
Selection skills, select best potential resources to meet information needs, principles of materials selection, principles of collection development, recommending resources for purchase, verify requested items for selection	8
Awareness of acquisition and disposition of resources, acquisitions, ordering materials	3
Information resources, knowledge of information sources, knowledge of sources	3
Collection management skills; analysis, interpretation, and evaluation of an existing collection	2
Knowledge of reviewing sources, evaluate resources	2
Understanding of preservation and conservation of collections, repair materials	2
Bibliography preparation	1
Collection development	1
Create, select, or acquire information resources	1
Develop resources for special populations	1
Develop, maintain, and evaluate information content	1
Identification, selection, and acquisition	1
Manage and/or preserve information resources	1
Receiving and processing materials	1
Retrieval, provision of access, storage, and preservation	1
Weeding	1

man communication, and advocacy. A final tenet of the foundations competency is communication, both written and verbal.

For this competency, none of the evaluation forms asked for assessment of the student related to the history of human communication, or made direct reference to legal implications of any quality.

Table 5. Frequency of “Organization of Recorded Knowledge and Information” Competencies.

Characteristic	Frequency
Cataloging, original cataloging, online editing, copy cataloging	6
Organize, classify, and deliver information; organize and/or describe information resources; organization of recorded knowledge and information, understands the principles of the organization and representation of information; understands information organization	6
Technical services skills, technical services and skills, work with technical matters	4
Shelve materials, reads shelves	2
Classification standards	1
Indexing	1
Management principles to the creation, administration, and promotion of information organizations and systems	1
Metadata	1
Perform proofreading and material correction	1
Periodical management	1
Uploading onto OPAC	1

Table 6. Frequency of "Technological Knowledge and Skills" Competencies.

Characteristic	Frequency
Information technology skills, demonstrated and acquired knowledge and skill in using information technologies, technological knowledge and skills, technology skills, possessed or learned technological skills needed	6
Evaluate and assess technologies	2
Media literacy/media utilization technologies	2
Understanding of technologies, understands, implements and/or uses appropriate technologies	2
Use of technologies in an ethical manner, proper use and care of department equipment	2
Comfortable with appropriate technology	1
Use assistive technologies	1
Use communication technologies	1
Use current information technologies	1

Information Resources

The "Information Resources" competency covers topics related to collection development, collection management, and preservation and maintenance of collections. It is concerned with the entire cycle

of information, including creation, selection, evaluation, processing, and disposal.

One form included information resources development specifically for special populations. For this competency, there were no mentions of purchasing of resources.

Table 7. Frequency of "Reference and User Services" Competencies.

Characteristic	Frequency
Reference and research skills, use primary reference tools, use secondary reference tools, provide bibliographic assistance	6
Programming, programming other than story hour, story hours, conduct library programs	4
Online searching, bibliographic searching	3
Provides consultation, mediation, and guidance to all users, serve diverse clientele, provides access to relevant information to diverse users	3
Determine information needs for self and for customers, ability to determine information needs for self and patrons	2
User services/reference, user guidance	2
Manage user-centered information services and systems to meet the needs of changing and diverse communities of users by analyzing the information needs of the individuals and communities in the context of the demographic, social, economic, and ethical factors	1
Readers advisory	1
Reference interviews/question negotiation	1
Retrieve and disseminate information	1
Telephone reference	1
Understands role in assisting patrons	1
Use print information	1

Table 8. Frequency of "Research" Competencies.

Characteristic	Frequency
Research techniques	1

Organization of Recorded Knowledge and Information

The "Organization of Recorded Knowledge and Information" competency encompasses general standards of information organization, cataloging, metadata, classification and indexing. It also includes the actual skills needed to be able to describe and organize resources.

Although developmental and evaluative skills did not appear on the forms, they are included in the competency document. For this competency, only one form inquired about the OPAC, indexing, or metadata.

Technological Knowledge and Skills

The "Technological Knowledge and Skills" competency is concerned with using technologies, applying them to different services, and being aware of emerging technology. It comprises different types of technology, including that related to communication, information, and assistive ones.

A few forms did separate out types of technology, and two made allusion to the use of technology in an ethical manner. For this competency, none of the evaluation forms asked for assessment of the student related to the appraisal of various

aspects of technologies, including technological specifications or cost-efficiency.

Reference and User Services

The "Reference and User Services" competency is broad, and covers general reference, literacy, advocacy, responding to diversity of patron needs, and development of services. It incorporates emerging circumstances that may have an effect on user services.

No forms included evaluation of numerical or statistical literacy, which appear in the ALA Core Competences. For this competency, none of the evaluation forms asked for assessment of the student related to emerging conditions that may affect user services.

Research

The "Research" competency is the shortest one. It mentions quantitative and qualitative methodologies, the research of the field, and the mechanisms to understand and utilize research findings.

For this competency, there was only one form that made any reference at all to research, and it was simply listed as research techniques.

Table 9. Frequency of "Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning" Competencies.

Characteristic	Frequency
Professional development, knowledge of professional development	2
Continuing education	1
Learn about, select, and join appropriate organizations for specialties	1
Participation in professional activities	1
Preparedness for profession	1

Table 10. Frequency of “Administration and Management” Competencies.

Characteristic	Frequency
Leadership, leadership skills, leadership principles	5
Administration/management, administrative ability, management	4
Supervision, supervisory skills	2
Assess information needs of diverse and underserved	1
Assess information services	1
Awareness of the principles of assessment and evaluation of library services/programs and outcomes	1
Discussed criteria used to evaluate services and programs	1
Negotiation skills	1
Planned with others	1

Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning

The “Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning” competency speaks of the role of the library, the need for professional involvement, and the application of lifelong learning. It also involves the application of learning theories and instruction in libraries.

Few forms incorporated the tenets of this competency. The mentions were

mostly about post-graduation professional development in respect to organizations, activities, and continuing education, and one was about preparedness for the profession.

Administration and Management

The last competency covers “Administration and Management.” It incorporates leadership, collaboration, assessment, human resources, planning, and budgeting.

Table 11. Frequency of Personal Characteristics.

Characteristic	Frequency
Initiative, willingness to take initiative	26
Dependable, dependability	18
Creative, creativity, imagination	17
Judgment, soundness of judgment	17
Decision-making, makes appropriate work decisions, makes decisions	9
Reliability, could be relied upon, reliability in following instructions	9
Flexible, flexibility, flexibility in handling new situations	7
Resourceful, resourcefulness	7
Responsible, responsibilities	7
Innovation, innovativeness, ingenuity	3
Curiosity	2
Self-director, self-starter	2
Act decisively	1
Originality	1
Think objectively	1
Understands and applies logical principles to the ‘doing’ of the project	1

This competency represents administration at a broad level, covering all stakeholders and communities served.

For this competency, none of the evaluation forms asked for assessment of the student related to budgeting, nor were there qualities on the forms about networking.

Non-Competence Based Qualities

The next section will cover the categories of characteristics on the evaluation forms that did not fall into the *ALA Core Competences*. These are:

- Personal Characteristics
- Relations with Others
- Work Habits
- Personal Knowledge and Abilities

- Ability to Learn
- Emotional Attributes
- Commitment
- Professionalism
- Work Performance
- Strengths and Weaknesses

Personal Characteristics

In the grouping category of “Personal Characteristics,” there are many qualities that are represented both as adjectives and nouns which describe personal attributes that a fieldwork student may or may not possess. These are reminiscent of what an employer might look for in a job candidate.

Initiative, dependability, creativity, and judgment floated solidly to the top of this list of characteristics. Many forms asked supervisors to rate these qualities. How-

Table 12. Frequency of Relations with Others Characteristics.

Characteristic	Frequency
Work with others, work well with supervisor, staff, and patrons; work with administrators, staff, public; work with patrons, work with staff, worked with staff and patrons; worked with staff, other personnel, and patrons/clients; working with the public; working with the staff, works well with coworkers	15
Cooperation, cooperate with members of his or her own and other units, cooperation with others, work cooperatively with others, cooperativeness, works cooperatively with other staff members	14
Interpersonal skills, Interaction with others, interacts successfully with all ages and groups, interpersonal relations, interpersonal relations with clientele, supervisors, colleagues, and staff, interpersonal relations with constituencies, relations with library public or staff, relations with others, interaction with others	11
Teamwork, adaptability to team environment, sense of teamwork, work as a team member, worked as team	8
Get along with others in a team environment, got along with other staff, interaction with office personnel, interaction with other staff, interaction with supervisor, interpersonal relations with peers	6
Collaboration, builds collaborative relationships, collaborate with future members of other information professions, collaboration with other students through group projects	4
Assisted and interacted with library users, deal with clientele	2
Customer service, human relations skills	2
Presented a professional manner with patrons, presented a professional manner with the other librarians	2
Compatibility to the work environment	1
Consideration of others	1
Effectiveness in dealing with others	1

Table 13. Frequency of Work Habit Characteristics.

Characteristic	Frequency
Organization, organization of work, organizational ability, organizational skills, organize, organized, organizing	16
Complete tasks, completes assigned tasks, completion of project goal(s), completion of projects, satisfactorily complete tasks, completed assigned tasks in a timely manner, completes project within allotted time frame, completes work in a timely manner, completed assignments promptly, and of high quality; assigned work performed satisfactorily	12
Independence, independence of action, independent project/research, independently act on needs, work independently, worked independently with no more than necessary instruction and supervision, performs independent projects without close supervision; has the ability to carry out job tasks with or without job supervision	11
Follow instructions, follow directions and ask questions, willingness to take direction; willing to ask for guidance and to follow it, willingness to ask for and use guidance	9
Helpfulness; willingness to serve	3
Prioritize, set priorities and make decisions, setting priorities	3
Time management, use of time	3
Work habits	3
Organizes, plans, and completes work efficiently; planning and organizing	2
Persistence, persistence to complete tasks	2
Plan, ability to plan	2
Take action without being asked to do so, anticipate needs	2
Accommodate change	1
Assumed responsibilities	1
Effective	1
Efficient	1
Follow-through	1
Managed multiple work assignments	1
Meeting deadlines	1
Speed	1

ever, not so many inquired as to the flexibility, resourcefulness, or responsibility of the fieldwork student. One form inquired as to whether the student “understands and applies logical principles to the ‘doing’ of the project.”

Relations with Others

The grouping category of “Relations with Others” is operationally defined as containing the many qualities concerned with how the fieldwork student got along with others, and how they worked with others.

Working with others, cooperation, and

interpersonal skills were the most frequently appearing characteristics on evaluation forms from this set of characteristics. They were represented in many forms, such as “cooperation,” “cooperation with others,” “work cooperatively with others.” Teamwork and the ability to get along with others also appeared repeatedly. Only one form asked as to the compatibility of the fieldwork student to the work environment, and only one asked about how considerate of others the student was.

Work Habits

In the grouping category of “Work

Table 14. Frequency of Personal Knowledge and Abilities Characteristics.

Characteristic	Frequency
Knowledge, academic knowledge, knowledge of tasks, professional knowledge, technical and professional knowledge	15
Problem solving skills, problem solving, create and communicate possible solutions to problems, suggest viable solutions for problems	8
Presentation skills, makes presentations to share knowledge, group presentation and individualized instruction	7
Assess skills, assess skills and knowledge	4
Grasp essentials, grasp of subject	4
Job knowledge over time, increasing knowledge and skills	3
Potential as a professional librarian, probability for success in the profession, professional ability	2
Bring unique talent to projects	1
Identifies, corrects and/or reports problem areas, identify problems and communicate findings	1
Knowledgeable and inquisitive concerning the relationship between theory and practice	1
Teaching skills	1
Technical skill	1

Table 15. Frequency of Ability to Learn Characteristics.

Characteristic	Frequency
Adaptability, adapt to a variety of tasks, adaptability to change, adaptable, adapted well to changes, adjustability	13
Learn from constructive criticism, learn from criticism, reacts well to suggestions, respond positively to criticism; attitude toward instruction/criticism, learn to take criticism; open to feedback and evaluation; learn from mistakes; accept constructive criticism, accept criticism, response to criticism	13
Desire to gain more expertise and knowledge of job, eagerness to learn, readiness to learn, professional responsibility to learn; willingness to acquire new skills, willingness to learn, willingness to learn new things; interest in the practicum as a learning experience	10
Ability to learn, ability to learn and apply new skills and procedures, aptitude for learning	5
Asks for clarification when unsure of proper procedures, seeks direction, seeks instruction; asks for direction	4
Ability to accept instructions, receptive to feedback and directions from supervisors, respond positively to direction	3
Application to work, apply oneself	2
Asks appropriate questions; asked questions, and reflected upon the answers	2
Willingness to assume responsibility	2
Exploited learning opportunities	1
Improvement in the student's skills over the course of the practicum	1
Interest in the work	1
Professional growth	1
Receptive to new ideas	1
Responsiveness to supervision	1
Seeks evaluation of performance	1

Habits,” the qualities are concerned with characteristics that directly relate to how the fieldwork student performs work assignments. Many speak of how the student handles direction, how they complete tasks, and how organized they are.

Although only one form asked fieldwork supervisors to evaluate the speed with which students completed tasks, many asked about whether or not the tasks were completed, how independently the student performed the task, and how organized they were in doing so. Some did ask about how well the fieldwork student followed directions, and others asked about the student’s ability to plan and prioritize.

Personal Knowledge and Abilities

The grouping category of “Personal Knowledge and Abilities” is operationally defined as the qualities that deal with the

student’s own comprehension of library skills and topics, and how they use that knowledge to perform in fieldwork assignments.

Job knowledge was the quality that appears most on evaluation forms from this thematic grouping. Problem-solving skills appeared the next most frequently, followed by presentation skills. Only one form included teaching skills, and only one asked fieldwork supervisors to assess the ‘unique talent’ of a student.

Ability to Learn

In the grouping category of “Ability to Learn,” the attributes deal with the potential of the fieldwork student, his or her willingness to learn, and the flexibility the student displays in handling new things.

The ability to accept and react to criticism appeared frequently on the forms in

Table 16. Frequency of Emotional Attributes.

Characteristic	Frequency
Attitude	9
Enthusiasm, enthusiasm for assignments, enthusiasm for the experience	8
Tact	5
Courtesy, courtesy to staff and volunteers	4
Alertness	3
Conduct, conduct at work, personal demeanor	3
Emotional stability, emotional stamina, possession of emotional control	3
Maturity	3
Poise	3
Assertiveness	2
Conscientious, conscientiousness	2
Cope in stressful learning situations, cope in stressful situations	2
Positive attitude, positive attitude towards assigned tasks	2
Self-control	2
Avoid bias and emotional response	1
Patience	1
Sensitivity	1
Stability	1
Tolerance	1
Vitality	1

Table 17. Frequency of Commitment Characteristics.

Characteristic	Frequency
Promptness, punctual, punctuality, arrived promptly and did not leave early; arrives for work ready to begin his or her shift	14
Attendance; arrives for work at scheduled time or has given prior notification of absence or lateness	11
Became informed about existing policies, informed about the institution's/department's policies, knowledge of policies and procedures, policy and procedures	4
Honors schedules, appointments, and deadlines; kept to schedule; commitment to scheduled work days and hours; followed the schedule without unexcused absences	4
Commitment, commitment to job	3
Adapted to the culture of the library's environment; show an understanding for your organizational culture, clients, and mission	2
Made a noticeable contribution to the department, project value to the organization	2
Participates in the organization/department meetings/activities, participation in library operations	2
Adheres to work area restrictions	1
Became familiar with reports, including how including how information is gathered, processed, routed and the use to which reports are put	1
Conformity to codes	1
Dedication	1
Discipline	1
Gained an appreciation, and understanding of your library/information center and its services	1
Maintenance of an atmosphere conducive to achieving the goals and objectives of the organization	1
Participated in agency activities in the community, as appropriate	1
Uphold the agreements made pertaining to working hours and assignments	1

one manner or another. Adaptability also emerged as a common basis for evaluation. The fieldwork student's willingness and eagerness to learn appears as the next most common attribute for evaluation. Appearing only once in the forms was whether or not the student sought evaluation of his or her performance, and whether or not he or she "exploited learning opportunities."

Emotional Attributes

In the category of "Emotional Attributes," the researcher includes characteristics that are more expressive in regards to personal sentiments and deportment. Manners and demeanor encompass these qualities.

This grouping category had the most unique non-competency attributes from the forms, with nothing appearing on more than nine forms. Poise, patience, sensitivity, and vitality appeared only once in the entire corpus of evaluation forms. Enthusiasm, attitude, and tact, however, were more common emotional attributes for evaluation.

Commitment

The grouping category of "Commitment" is operationally defined as containing the qualities incorporating how the fieldwork student fits in to the organization, how they adhere to the basic schedules, culture, and restrictions of the workplace.

Table 18. Frequency of Professionalism Characteristics.

Characteristic	Frequency
Professional behavior; professional demeanor; professionalism; work professionally; acted in a professional manner, conduct herself/himself in a professional manner; demonstrate professional growth	15
Ethical attitude, ethical standards, ethical standards and practices; high ethical and professional standards; maintains ethical behavior	8
Integrity, professional integrity, commitment to professional principles	7
Appearance, dress code, grooming, personal appearance	4
Professional attitude	4
Service ethic; service orientation	3
Trustworthiness	2
Completes assignments in a professional manner	1
Equity	1
Interested in professional issues and policies	1
Vision	1
Worked within a reasonable set of expectations for conduct as defined by the profession and workplace	1

Attendance and punctuality were the front running qualities from this category. Other characteristics here are vaguely similar, but hard to group. For example, one

school grouped adherence to agreements about schedule and assignments in one rating. Another asked for a simple rating of the fieldwork student's discipline.

Table 19. Frequency of Work Performance Characteristics.

Characteristic	Frequency
Quality, quality of assignments, quality of assignments completed, quality of work, quality of effort	18
Accuracy, accurate, accurately, attention to accuracy and detail, attention to detail, completes assigned tasks accurately	8
Quantity of work	7
Thorough, thoroughness	6
Met objectives, met practicum standards, achieved objectives, fulfilled expectations for working productively	4
Performance, work performance	4
Productivity	3
Admits errors, avoidance of errors and ability to learn from them	2
Industriousness, industry/thoroughness	2
Creates project successfully	1
Demonstrated growth	1
Performance met minimum standards for academic credit	1
Physical stamina	1
Project completed and delivered in timely fashion	1
Seemed to gain much	1

Table 20. Frequency of Strengths and Weaknesses.

Characteristic	Frequency
Strengths	17
Recognizes personal strengths	1
Areas of excellence	1
Areas for improvement	20
Recognizes need for improvement	1
Recognizes areas for improvement	1
Weaknesses	2

Professionalism

In the grouping category of "Professionalism," the fieldwork student's standards and ethics are rated. From dress code to personal vision of librarianship, it is through these attributes the student demonstrates his or her professional attitude and behavior.

Vision and equity each appeared once on an evaluation form. Professional behavior dominated this category with 15 appearances in different variations on the forms. The fieldwork student's ethical standards also appeared often. Trustworthiness materialized in this category twice, and four schools asked the supervisors to rate the students' grooming.

Table 21. Most Frequently Appearing Evaluation Characteristics.

Characteristic	Frequency
Initiative	26
Areas for improvement/weaknesses	24
Strengths	19
Dependability	18
Quality of assignments	18
Communication skills	17
Creativity	17
Judgment	17
Organization skills	16
Works with others	15
Professionalism	15

Work Performance

The quality, quantity, and method through which the fieldwork student accomplishes work appear in the grouping category of "Work Performance." It is in this category that the fieldwork supervisor rates his or her student on performance and whether or not tasks are completed.

Many schools asked fieldwork supervisors about their students' work quality; fewer asked about the quantity of work the student performed. Accuracy and thoroughness appeared as the next most often. One school asked about the students' physical stamina.

Strengths and Weaknesses

The simplest grouping category is "Strengths and Weaknesses." These qualities generally appear at the end of the evaluation forms, and usually incorporate a space for narrative explanation.

More schools asked about a fieldwork student's weaknesses, or areas of improvement, than asked about the strengths, or areas of excellence. In few cases was this phrased from the student's point of view, as in whether or not the student acknowledges his or her own strengths and weaknesses.

The most frequently appearing characteristic for evaluation on the forms provided by library schools to fieldwork supervisors is "initiative." Secondly, schools asked for "areas for improvement" the next most often.

Conclusion

As stated above, it might be helpful to reexamine the evaluation forms provided to fieldwork supervisors for evaluation of students. In 1980, after conducting an analysis of fieldwork evaluation forms from 23 schools, Coburn created a sample evaluation form that could be used by a supervisor in a fieldwork experience to assess a student. He took the commonly appearing

rating scales and evaluation characteristics on library school evaluation forms and accumulated them into one.

This research has undertaken a similar approach by identifying the most frequently appearing characteristics from 47 library school fieldwork evaluation forms, comparing that to what fieldwork supervisors indicate they use as a basis for evaluation of fieldwork students, and suggesting additional characteristics to comprise a new evaluation form. Most library school-provided evaluation forms do not incorporate the *ALA Core Competences of Librarianship* and other practical skills that fieldwork supervisors state they wish they could evaluate. To do this, the researcher proposes a four part form that would cover assignments, core competencies, personal characteristics, and final thoughts. A full example of said form can be found in Appendix A.

Evaluation Form Section One: Assignments

The introductory section of the proposed evaluation form would contain general information about the fieldwork experience. It should contain:

- Name of student
- Semester
- Name of supervisor & hosting institution
- Due date
- Contact information (email and phone)
- Where to return form

There should also be a brief statement thanking the supervisor for his or her input:

Thank you for supporting the Library School Fieldwork Program. The fieldwork experience you provide is a valuable part of our students' educational experience. We value the information you can supply about the fieldwork student's activities and contributions during the fieldwork experience. Please use the following form to appraise the student's involvement and performance.

There could be a place for the supervisor to sign if they give permission for the evaluation information to be shared with the student:

Although final grades are assigned by Library School, your evaluation provides constructive information that we use in conjunction with final reports to fully assess the student. This evaluation is confidential, and will not be shared with the student without your permission. If you agree to share this with the student, please sign here: _____.

The last part of this initial section of the form should have at least these two things:

- List the goals set with the student, the general responsibilities of the student, and/or specific projects completed.
- Did the student work the required number of hours to complete the fieldwork experience?

Evaluation Form Section Two: Core Competences

The following section of the proposed evaluation form would contain rating tables in which the fieldwork supervisor would use a defined scale to rate the student's performance in the various aspects of the ALA Core Competences. An example is given in Table 22 below. The rating scale uses '5' as best and '1' as worst.

Evaluation Form Section Three: Personal Characteristics

This section of the proposed evaluation form integrates the most commonly appearing characteristics from the analyzed library school evaluation forms with a few others suggested by respondents to the online survey and interviews. Characteristics are broken into these sections: general characteristics, relations with others, work habits, ability to learn, commitment, professionalism, work performance, and emotional attributes. A sample section of

give feedback to the library school about the host site supervisor's thoughts on the fieldwork experience. These could include:

- Do you have any thoughts on improving the fieldwork experience?
- How can the library school help you during the fieldwork experience?
- Would you like to host another fieldwork student?
- Do you believe that the library school has adequately prepared this student for work in a library/information institution?
- Did you/your institution benefit from this experience? If so, how?

The full example given in Appendix A is longer than each of the forty seven forms analyzed for this research. There are forty one separate competency statements alone in ALA's *Core Competences of Librarianship* document, and when combined with a variety of personal characteristics, it is acknowledged that this form could be considered too lengthy and excessive by library schools. The researcher contends that the inclusion of a choice of NA for "not applicable" gives the supervisor the prerogative to exclude any unsuitable characteristic or competence for evaluation. The inclusion of the content for potential evaluation, however, gives a more accurate picture of the performance of the student, and therefore aids the library school is assessment.

A gap in fieldwork research in library science is the lack of a current comprehensive analysis of fieldwork in library and information science programs (Ball, 2008; Banks & Lents, 1992). Another major gap is the paucity of input or recommendations from governing organizations, or groups at a national level, aside from the over-twenty-year-old ALISE's 1990 *Guidelines for Practices and Principles in the Design, Operation, and Evaluation of Student Field Experiences*. There does not appear to be a current 'Board for Librarianship' or 'Alliance of LIS Educa-

tors' that is making recommendations or creating accreditation requirements regarding fieldwork. ALA's 2008 *Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies* make no mention of fieldwork at all.

Assessment of fieldwork is another area needing more exploration, and one in which national organizations should get involved. The discrepancies between library school programs as to grading and course credit merits more study. Perhaps a recommended uniform rubric that could be modified by each school to lay out an assessment plan would be useful. Also, looking into the responsibility of assessment, and who it ultimately lies with, is lacking published research at this time. Though not always a required course, fieldwork is offered as part of all but one English-speaking library schools' curricula. The fieldwork experience is important to students, libraries, and library schools, and offers benefits to each. The supervisors of fieldwork students are an integral part of the experience, and the entire experience warrants further exploration through targeted research.

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Appendix

Sample Fieldwork Evaluation Form

Library School Name: _____

Name of student: _____

Name of supervisor: _____

Hosting Institution: _____

Email: _____

Telephone: _____

Semester: _____

Due Date: _____

Please complete and send this form to:

Thank you for supporting the Library School Fieldwork Program. The fieldwork experience you provide is a valuable part of our students' educational experience. We value the information you can supply about the fieldwork student's activities and contributions during the fieldwork experience. Please use the following form to appraise the student's involvement and performance.

Although final grades are assigned by library school, your evaluation provides constructive information that we use in conjunction with final reports to fully assess the student. This evaluation is confidential, and will not be shared with the student without your permission. If you agree to share this with the student, please sign here:

Part One—Assignments

List the goals set with the student, the general responsibilities of the student, and/or specific projects completed.

Did the student work the required number of hours to complete the fieldwork experience?

Part Two—Core Competencies

This section contains the American Library Association's Core Competences of Librarianship <http://www.ala.org/educationcareers/careers/corecomp/corecompetences>. According to their website, "The Core Competences of Librarianship define the knowledge to be possessed by all persons graduating from ALA-accredited master's programs in library and information studies." Each part of the eight competencies is included below.

Please use the following scale to evaluate the student's performance:

- 5 = Excellent
- 4 = Very Good
- 3 = Average
- 2 = Needs Improvement
- 1 = Unacceptable
- NA = Not Applicable

[illegible]

[illegible]

Part Three—Personal Characteristics

Please use the following scale to evaluate the student's performance:

5 = Excellent

4 = Very Good

3 = Average

2 = Needs Improvement

1 = Unacceptable

NA = Not Applicable

[illegible]

	5	4	3	2	1	NA
Work Performance						
Quality of work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quantity of work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thoroughness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accuracy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recognizes strengths	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recognizes areas for improvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emotional Attributes						
Attitude	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enthusiasm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tact	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Courtesy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maturity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part Four—Final Thoughts

Please comment on the student's strengths:

Please comment on the student's areas for improvement:

Please provide any other comments you have on this student not covered in this evaluation:

If you had a vacancy, would you hire this student?

Would you give this student a recommendation to a prospective employer?

Information for the Library School:

Do you have any thoughts on improving the *library school's* fieldwork experience?

How can the library school help you during fieldwork experiences?

Would you like to host another fieldwork student?

Do you believe that *library school* has adequately prepared this student for work in a library/information institution?

Did you/your institution benefit from this experience? If so, how?